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***NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service Weekly
Statewide Influenza Activity Summary***

Week Ending November 4, 2005

Influenza level of activity: "NO ACTIVITY"

Influenza testing performed in New Jersey by:

- ◆ The Public Health and Environmental Laboratories (PHEL)*
- ◆ The WHO and NREVSS (National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System)* Laboratories from September 20, 2005 to present:
 - Number of influenza A culture confirmed cases: None
 - Number of influenza B culture confirmed cases: One

This is the sixth week of the 2005-06 influenza season in New Jersey. The NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service has not been notified of any influenza outbreak or increased activity in any health care facilities, nursing homes or schools throughout the state. Three weeks ago, one of the two laboratories mentioned above reported the first culture positive influenza case of the season.

Rates of influenza-like illness (ILI) from nursing homes and emergency department visits are 0.93% and 3.74% respectively while the rate for school absenteeism is 5.00%.

Hospital laboratory surveillance for respiratory syncytial virus (often clinically indistinguishable from influenza virus infection) showed only a few positives this week. The monthly RSV summary has been updated. Of the 276 RSV tests performed in the month of October, 48 were positive. We expect a steady rise in both numbers as we move deeper into the season.

A few of the county percentage parameters showed figures well above the total average (see 01Nov05pdf Table) but should not be interpreted as an increased level of activity since the denominator of reporting entities is very small.

Based on the data collected from the entire ILI Surveillance System, the level of influenza activity in the state of New Jersey is at a "NO ACTIVITY" level this week. This level of activity is comparable with the same period last season.

The Food and Drug Administration's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee has recommended that the 2005-06 trivalent influenza vaccine (TIV) for the United States contain:

- A/New Caledonia/20/99-like (H1N1),
- A/California/7/2004-like (H3N2), and
- B/Shanghai/361/2002-like viruses.

This recommendation was based on antigenic analyses of recently isolated influenza viruses, epidemiological data, and post-vaccination serologic studies in humans.

Based on the latest information from Sanofi Pasteur, Inc., they began shipping influenza vaccine to their customers during the first week of August. To date, approximately 95 percent of their customers have received at least a partial delivery of their order. By the end of October they shipped over 45 million doses. Chiron on the order hand, announced on November 2, 2005 that they have recently made their first shipments of FLUVIRIN vaccine to their distributors in the US for the 2005-2006 influenza season. Both companies (Sanofi Pasteur, inc and Chiron) expect to complete shipment of vaccines to customers before the usual peak of influenza season.

The DHSS website listing the local health department and other flu clinics is now operational and is available at <http://www.nj.gov/health/flu/>. The public can get information on where flu shots are being given from the website.

Influenza virus infection itself is not a clinical or laboratory reportable disease in New Jersey according to N.J.A.C. 8:57. Accordingly, activity levels must be extrapolated from weekly monitoring activities of healthcare facilities and providers dispersed around the state.

President Bush, in a speech this week unveiled a broad plan on safeguarding America against pandemic influenza. A fact sheet from the White House regarding the President's speech can be found at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

*The laboratories conduct testing of pre-season isolates and the first isolates of the season. These isolates can provide information regarding circulating strains and information necessary for the vaccine formulation for the following year's flu season. Also test results from representative samples collected during peak influenza activity late in the season, and after a major influenza outbreak, may identify new variants that are just beginning to circulate in the community, helping to inform vaccine formulations for the following year.

References and Resources:

- <http://www.nj.gov/health/flu/preventflu.shtml>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>
- <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/en/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/>